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long wands of office, of black wood topped with silver knobs. About their necks were heavy silver chains, and from each chain was suspended a large silver crescent.

Another man stood near them to one side. He wore a long coat of white edged with scarlet and blue. He carried no stick, and wore no insignia. On his head, over a white kerchief wound tightly about the head and caught up in the back, was a white sun helmet. Above his head, held by one of the younger men who accompanied him, was an umbrella, the highest emblem of rank. It betokened that this man was Moana Yankuso, Granman of the Saramacca people.

3

Kasanya was first out of the boat when the dugouts were brought to shore, and after him came Bibifo. Sedefo and Asikanu remained with the younger men, waiting for the Granman to indicate that he wished to receive them. Only men of rank and elderly members of his own clan would go at this time to speak to the headman, who stood there watching the boats.

"We came, G'aman," we heard Kasanya say, "and we brought the Bak'a." Two or three low-voiced sentences followed, and then the conversation was terminated by the elderly functionary in the yellow coat, who came down to our boat.

"I greet you in the name of the G'aman, Bak'a," he announced. "The G'aman himself awaits you. Come with me."

As we stepped out of the boat, the hallooing of the women and the shouts of the children, which had stopped when the paddlers addressed the Granman, began once again, and, as an underlying voice, the salutes from the shotgun were to be heard. The old man, shifting his wand of office to his left hand, now carefully helped first the one, then the other out of the boat and, offering his arm to each in turn, led us to the top of the steep rise, until we were face to face with the Granman. It would have been unlucky had we lost our footing at this moment of welcome. This chieftain was

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there not only to tender the courtesy due the guests of the tribal head, but to see that no such mishap occurred to them.

When we had both gained the ascent, he turned to the Granman.

"Headman Yankuso, the Bak'a is before you."

As though just become aware of us, Yankuso fixed us with his eyes, fastening his glance on each in turn.

"Odi, white man. White woman, odi!"

A great figure of a man he was, as he stood there. Tall and massive of build, he towered over those who surrounded him. Barefooted like the rest, there was that in his bearing which was the way of a man who was accustomed to obedience, whose word was final. He was pure Negro. His skin was dark. In his features there was no hint that the lineage of this ruler held any of the blood of the white masters, nor that his ancestors numbered among them Indians who had given way before his invading forbears. His face was impassive, yet underneath the outward immobility was an alertness which the glistening, oil-anointed skin made the more alive. His speech was measured, his words articulated with studied emphasis, which gave to each of them the value of a completed image.

"*Bari*—Cry out!" he called to the women in his vibrant voice. "Halloo, give the welcome of the bush to the people who came."

Amid the renewed cries which his command brought, we turned from the river bank and walked slowly up the path toward the village, past the silk-cotton tree, past the shrine to the ancestors, until we reached an open place on which fronted half a dozen thatched buildings.

"This is my house, white man," he said, pointing to it. "I will put you near me. I will put you in the council house."

4

The council house at Asindopo Lantiwe—the village of Asin, the seat of government—was unlike any we had seen.

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Above the door was a shelf which did not quite reach the entire width of the wall, and on this shelf were the council benches, which the Granman supplied to the visiting chiefs. These benches were small, low, and as little ornamented with carvings as the work stools used by the women. But on the sides symbols were incised, and at least two of them we were able to identify as clan emblems. One of these had the conventionalized patterning of the hatchet, the emblem of the Granman's clan, and another a flower which is associated with the people from whose group come the principal diviners. The tops of these simple stools sometimes had inlays of dark wood, but whether their outlines were of ritualistic importance or not, no one would say.

From the beams hung several umbrellas, still inside the wrappings in which they had come from the white man's city, and a wickless metal lamp, into whose chains envelopes were inserted. These envelopes contained letters received by the Granman which awaited the coming of the missionary to be read, or letters which had already been read, and were there to add color to the official scene.

There were also other *Bakra sani*—white man's things—in the house. A canvas folding chair which filled almost an entire wall stood against the slats beside which, on the outside, were the earthen jars. This was for the Granman. He sat in it with the majesty of an emperor. No one ever approached it too closely, and we were never invited to take our ease in it when the Granman was in his own house.

In addition, there was a table in the center of the room, covered with a red and black plaid cloth from the city, and two straight-back chairs. On the table stood an alarm clock which was set for the noncommittal hour of twelve and a glass decanter filled with rum.

Chief And'u was the first to join us inside.

"It is fine here at the G'aman's."

"Yes, it is a fine house. And you, And'u, you look well in your coat. Is it when you are with the Granman that you dress so?"

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622 "It is the coat of a chief. All chiefs wear these coats
292 At the G'aman's we wear the best we have."

[293] We looked at his silver-topped wand of office. "Do all chiefs carry these?" we asked.

"Not every chief has a stick like mine. And all chiefs do not have one of these." He pointed to the crescent of silver which hung from a chain about his neck.

"It is beautiful."

"Ya-hai. And it's old."

Embossed on the silver plaque were the arms of Holland, richly worked.

622 "After the time of running away, when the fighting was
648 over between our ancestors and the whites, these were given
293 to us, and the wands of office. But not all chiefs have their
643 wands from the white man. Some have the ones we call 'free sticks.' A man who has a 'free stick' is not a chief for the white man, but we know that he is a chief."

He added that the whites had made an agreement with the escaped Negroes that if they would no longer raid the plantations and carry away slaves with them they would be considered free men in their bush, under the white man's government. Since that time the Bush Negro Granman and certain of the village chiefs had had official recognition, and as a token of this each of them had been given a uniform, a [292] high hat, a crescent with the arms of Holland worked on it, a silver-headed staff, and an annual stipend.

"The chiefs who have 'free sticks,' the white man does not pay."

576 As we spoke of these things, we were interrupted from time to time by the noiseless brushing aside of the cloth which hung above the door, and the entrance of one of our men, or a man of the Granman's village, who brought in our canisters and hammocks. With not even a glance in our direction, they would leave as noiselessly and return to the river. Through the slatted side walls we could hear the sounds of such activity as we had not thought possible in the tropics.

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Now it was the Granman's turn to supply the interpolations, while Kasanya and Bibifo reported.

"Yes, so it is. So I know it to be myself. So I have heard," he spoke when they paused.

But when the ceremonial greetings were over, and the conversation turned to down-river affairs, the Granman leaned forward in his chair and talked with the men informally. They were all clan members, or men belonging to clans whose allegiance to the Granman's rule was undoubted, and they talked over many things in the way men do when they meet with their own kind.

The room was growing darker. Yankuso called through the slatted wall against which he was leaning, and the young man who had fired the guns entered.

"Bassia, it is getting late. We must leave this house to the white man. These men with me are my friends. They must drink before they leave."

The bassia took the decanter from the table, and from the shelf underneath it, where we could dimly see shells and containers of shot, he took several small glasses. Before taking the glass to his lips, each man poured some of the liquor on the ground as a libation to the Earth Mother, and, as each drank, he turned to Yankuso and asked if he might leave.

"*Mi da permissi*—I grant you permission," he said to each.

When we had finished our meal, it was already dark. At the door of his own house, Granman Yankuso was sitting on a low stool.

"I have something for you," he said, disappearing inside his house. When he came out, he held in his hand some black object, which we were unable to identify. "You have fire?" he asked, as he suspended this object from a tree which grew between his house and the one in which we were staying.

"There was a white Hollander here who brought this to me. He went from here farther into the bush. He never came out. Light is a good thing at night. When visitors

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Chapter XI

THE COUNCIL OF THE ELDERS

I

GRANMAN Yankuso's day began before the break of dawn. When the day was at its coolest men's hearts were cool, people said here on the river, and when hearts were cool they could be trusted with weighty matters. But long before men came to stand outside the Granman's house advising with him as he lay in his hammock, the women arrived to report in low monotones the happenings of the previous day, and to take orders for the one to follow.

Lying in our hammocks in the council house, separated from the speakers by the wall of palings and perhaps five feet of clearing, we could hear voices outside from a little after three in the morning, until with the coming day the soft footfalls died down and gave way to the sound of stamping mortars and the cries of children recalling their mothers from early tasks.

What was being said outside we could not hear, but as the days wore on we learned to recognize the voices of the speakers. We learned to know from the rapid, contradicting flow of words which followed upon one of the Granman's orders, that it was his principal wife who spoke, or from the halting, crooning phrases, the voice of his eldest daughter, who had mastered her father's gentlest intonations and now of a morning brought them forth as though she were speaking her lesson. We learned to know as well the range and intensity of the subdued grunts with which

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pieces of red and blue cloth worked with this thread, so that again the white vertebrae showed. Bayo and Angita wore their beads, and each had a garter below the knee of the right leg. Their garters were white in color, but of a whiteness which only new, unwashed cotton has. They were about an inch and a half wide and were so tight that the muscle of the calf bulged prominently. On their upper arms were Kromanti rings of iron which, by contracting, warned the men of impending danger. In addition, Sedefo and Angita wore the bell obia of the Gankwe people, and Bayo his love obia which had come from Lamé.

"When do you go, Sedefo?"

"When the G'aman speaks. When we finish a piece of work, then we do not want to be paid at once. We do not leave at once. It would be as if we had not gone together in pleasure and wanted to be away as soon as possible. With the white man it is one thing. In the bush we do not do it so. Here in the G'aman's village, we do as we do with our own people in the bush," he paused for an instant, and looked about toward the clearing outside the palings. "There is another thing. In the G'aman's village, men cannot leave until the G'aman gives permission. When the G'aman is ready, he will call us. We will speak together. Then we will speak with him again. Then we will ask to go."

Bayo had been looking about the council house with an interest which was not unmixed with awe at the Granman's possessions, and he spoke in whispers.

"Ai, when the G'aman gives permission, then we go."

As he spoke, the cloth over the doorway was gently thrust aside. Bassia Anaisi of the Granman's village entered. He was the man who had fired the saluting gun the day of our arrival and who had at the Granman's call come to serve the visiting chiefs with rum. He now greeted each in turn but did not take down a bench. For a moment he stood there, head lowered out of deference to the character of the place where he was, then he coughed slightly and, turning to us, said, "The G'aman is ready for you. The chiefs are here."

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623 643 [291] Our paddlers rose at once and left the council house. A moment later And'u entered, followed by a group of elders with closely drawn kerchiefs covering their heads. Among these only Kasanya and Bibifo were known to us. Kasanya brought his bench close to ours and moved it yet closer, with a gesture of the head that he wanted to continue the intimacy of our ten days' journey together.

"White man," he said, leaning over and whispering, "call your man from the city. At a krutu a man has someone to speak for him. So we do here."

576 623 643 And so, we soon saw, it was. Address in the council of the Saramacca people was always by indirection. If the Granman wished to speak to one of his chiefs, then he gave his message through another chief, though the man for whom the words were intended might be closer to him or more clearly in view.

643 623 [292] 302 291 Others came in, until the room was half filled when the Granman entered. Today he wore a printed red and black loose coat of knee length, and over it the ceremonial cloth worn by men here in the bush, so that where other men's bare shoulders showed was the sleeve of his coat. On his head were both kerchief and sun helmet. The men were anointed with oil, and many of them wore the jaguar's tooth obia. The last to enter was a man who was well past middle age, and he was followed by the young *obiaman* from S'ei. Both of these men wore the cloths required of men when not at work, but they were not so uncreased, or so new. Nor were their bodies bright with oil. The older man had several broad stripes of white clay from wrist to shoulder of his right arm, and from knee to pelvis on the inner left thigh. Slung from one shoulder and reaching across to the opposite thigh was a white obia made of native fiber, and on his neck were several others. To these [089] obias were added iron bands on his arms, while below his right knee and at the ankle of his right foot were other obias made of fiber and twisted black thread.

623 The men we knew greeted us as they took down their benches and found places against the wall farthest from the

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641 over whom it was exercised. When the ancestors of the
Bush Negroes were brought to New World slavery, what
[567] measure of acquiescence they showed was due to the fact
that slavery was not an unfamiliar tradition to them. They
knew of the war captive, or the man convicted of a serious
crime, who was a slave to one of their own kind. But the
experience of the white man's slavery was a crucible in
which the ownership of man by man, and the unquestioning
obedience which men owed to those of higher rank, were
destroyed, leaving only the ideal of the life of free men.
"Free!" was the way in which one Bush Negro toasted
[203] another, or a white man, when he drank with him. A "*Man*
Nèngere," an adult Negro was, above all, a free man, and
621 it was as a freeman that he was governed, for though
villages had chiefs, and there were bassias who were sub-
ordinate to chiefs, and though above the village chiefs were
clan chiefs, and over them all the Granman, yet the final
word rested with the members of each subsidiary body,
and not with its leader.

624 Every village had its officials, and its medium for discus-
622 sions. Every clan had its head, and its old men, who,
[614] sounding out the will of the clan members, consulted with
that head when questions were to be decided. For the
decisions affecting the entire Saramacca River, there were
● [643] the Granman and his krutu, before whom questions of
[692] larger policy or disputes between villages were brought.

Perhaps most impressive of all was the measure of auton-
632 omy which each village had. A village, or certainly a group
614 of neighboring villages belonging to the same clan, formed
609 a small kingdom. A Bush Negro of another village who
came to visit, came as any stranger, paddle in hand, his
top cloth covering his loin cloth. When he found himself
in a strange village on a night when a dance was being
given, he did not join the dancers until after much urging
by a native of that village, and then he danced little, and
if he were a particularly fine dancer, he took care not to
flaunt his superior gifts. The exception to this, to be sure,
were the sacred dances, when a stranger, whose god came

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assemblies such as were reported from the Awka people on the Marowyne were here not called regularly. There was no central body here to make decisions. The autonomy of village and clan seemed almost unquestioned. There were, to be sure, clan alliances, but these bore more directly on the factions which had formed to control the choice of the next headman. At this krutu, therefore, which had just gathered, there were Captain Sungi, head of the Kasito or Dahomey clan, and And'u, the able chief of the Dombi people, and the headman of the Popoto people, and the headman of the Anago. But Fandya of Baikutu who headed the Nasi people was not there, nor were the Awana people represented, nor the Alabaisa, nor Kwama, nor Bi'ito, nor Fandaki, to cite some examples. Of the missing chiefs, several of them lived a considerable distance from the seat of the Granman, and indeed had been to his village but few times.

"Ai, men must krutu," Kasanya had told us one day on the river. "If a few men decide, then the others have anger in their hearts. That is not good. When the lanti meets, and all men talk, then those who came with anger cool their hearts. Talk is good."

And another time, Sedefo had found occasion to quote the proverb, "If you have not settled one thing, you cannot go on to the second." The best way was to talk things over until all men saw that what was proposed was good or bad.

4

In the krutu house of Asindopo Lantiwe the Granman began to speak.

"Mati—friends—the white man has come. He sits there. With him is his wife. She is there beside him. The man from the white man's city has come. He is there. He will speak for the white man. The white man has a cook. The cook is outside."

"So it is, G'aman," said Captain Sungi.

"Mati, the white man came. All who come to me must eat. The white man must eat."

"True, true, master of the realm."

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623 574 643 "Bassia," said the Granman, as he turned to the young man who had come to announce the krutu to us, "go and tell the lanti the white man has come. Tell the lanti the white man must be fed. All who come to this place must eat. Tell the people they must hunt and fish. Let them bring their kill to us here. Let them bring the fish they catch in their traps. Let all know, and may the gods favor their hunting."

"Ai, clever master," came the response, as the bassia left to issue the orders of the Granman.

623 648 "Bak'a," he said, turning to us, "you come from the city of the white man. The G'aman of the white man, in the white man's city, two moons ago, sent a message to us. It is here." He rose from his chair, and reached for several envelopes which were inserted in the chains of the hanging lamp. "What has been written, we cannot read. You know the writing that white men know. Read what the G'aman of the white man has said."

We opened the letter, with its great official seal. In it was a message from the Governor of the Colony, telling Granman Yankuso of our projected trip to the country of the Saramacca people, asking that we be received by him at his village. All this was read in its translation and transmitted to the Granman by our town man. As he spoke, it was the Granman who punctuated his pauses with the ceremonial affirmations.

"So it is."

"So I hear."

"It is as I know."

All listened attentively to the reading of the letter, and when it was concluded, the Granman turned to the members of the krutu.

"Captain Awagi, when I go to the white man's city, word is sent on ahead so that the people of the city know when the G'aman of the Saramacca people comes. So it is in the bush. When a white man comes to the bush, it is well that from the white man's city they tell me who is coming."

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THE COUNCIL OF THE ELDERS

"Kodo!"

"Another letter has come, Bak'a. Will you read that one, too?"

This was a communication written by a lumber factor down the river. One of the villages, it seemed, was in dispute with another over timber rights. The case was laid before the Granman by the factor, who asked that the controversy be settled promptly, since the dispute was keeping the men of both villages from cutting the lumber which had been promised him.

Yankuso now spoke again: "You have heard the message, friends. The man who buys timber asks that I settle this dispute between two of our clans. Their villages are far from here. The clans of the Saramacca people can settle their own disputes."

"Gbolo!"

"So I say, friends. I can look at the cows, but from a distance I cannot tell how many there are. It is not for us here to decide this."

"*Kweti, kweti!*—No, no!"

"It is true, friends, as the Saramacca people say, 'The G'aman's breasts are for all his children.' But it is not my children who have come to me. Bak'a," he said, suddenly turning to us, "later you will write for me to this man who buys lumber. Tell him that for the sake of sweet soup a man eats sour dumplings. So I say."

The Granman looked about him. The heat of midday filled the darkness of the council house, and old Bibifo had dozed off. The gaze of the chief fixed him.

"Mati!" he said, when Bibifo stirred. "Sleep is death!"

Slowly the Granman's eyes circled the room until they came to us.

"The Bak'a has come," he repeated, with his slow intonation, every syllable clearly enunciated. "When the Bak'a came, the rain fell. From Asindopo Lantiwe we shot guns of welcome, from Abenda Konde guns were shot. In the heavens, the gods spoke them welcome. There was thunder."

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643 821 796 623 "True, true, G'aman."

"Captain And'u, the gods sent the rain to cool everything when the Bak'a came. The gods of the river carried the Bak'a without mishap. We have heard of what the Bak'a has done. He has been at your country, at S'ei. He says he comes to learn. He says he does not come to buy wood or to work gold. What he says is good. Yet a full creek does not clear the bank of weeds. Tell us what the Bak'a did in your country, Captain And'u."

609 123 623 "The Bak'a came to S'ei. All that was there he looked at. He walked about the village. His woman talked to our women. The Bak'a spoke with our men. He asked about the obias in the krutu house. His woman asked our women about their gods. What was the name of the wife of the Gran Gadu, he wanted to know."

With every sentence, came the affirmation of the chief.

"So I know."

"So it is."

"By Ando!"

"So I heard."

And'u continued. "The Bak'a knows the land of the Negroes—*a sabi Afrika*. With him he has a great book. In it he has pictures."

"True, true."

"There are pictures of obias."

"Ya-hai!"

"There are pictures of the Kromanti houses."

"So it is!"

"There are pictures of people who have the gods."

"*Kweti-kweti*—No, no!"

"Yet pictures in S'ei the Bak'a did not make. The Bak'a said, 'If your ancestors tell you not to talk, do not talk. But when you talk, do not lie! That which we did not wish to be done he would not do, his woman would not do."

"Gbolo!" exclaimed the Granman, "this is as I have heard. Now the Bak'a has come up the river. His woman has light hair, she is as our Toné people. The river has treated the Bak'a well. The gods of the river have let the Bak'a pass. 796

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"Wife of the G'aman,
I come from the river.
Go to the G'aman
Say to him,
These strangers are friends,
They bring no evil."

It was the god speaking, and the Granman's wife received with lowered head the words spoken through the priestess.

"Ai, my master. Ai, Massa Gadu," she said.

5

The Granman's paternal village was directly across the river from Asindopo Lantiwe. It was called Akisiamau, literally "Took with an outstretched hand," but whether there was also some meaning in the phrase not intended for the uninitiated, we could not learn. In size it was not much larger than the Granman's village, and again and again we recognized houses which were his by the crest-like carvings on the doorposts, that reproduced the design found not only at the side of the council-house door, but at the door of all other houses at Asindopo Lantiwe which were his.

Except for several old people who sat about in the shade and waited for the strangers to come to them with their greetings, the entire village followed us as we made our way down one path and another.

"*Bak'a, Ame'ika Bak'a, Ame'ika Fandya!*—White man. American white man, American Fandya!" the children called after us, as they ran at our heels, touching our canteens, our sun helmets, and shoes.

The Granman had spoken with especial fondness of his father's house, and it was there that we asked first to be taken. It was not occupied, we were told, and none might enter it. Above the top crosspiece white cotton was draped. Except that its door was closed, it showed no signs of being

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342 643 uninhabited. Its posts and walls and thatch were in excellent condition, and there was not even the weather-beaten appearance about it of a house which had been closed for some time. Nor had it the kandu, the spiritual lock of unoccupied houses.

778 346 To one side of this house was the open shrine to the great gods, the pole to the Sky God, the smaller one with a checked tunic across the middle of it for the Earth Mother. But there was also a figure of wood with a broad white cloth hung from it like a flag, and this, the villagers said, was the image of the Granman's father. When the dead man's spirit came to the village, it was this image he animated. In times of need and on days fixed by ritual, it was to this image that prayers and food were brought.

Some distance from this shrine, standing close to the uncleared bush, was a house that had been deserted. Half of it the great bush had already reclaimed. The thatch of the roof and one entire side wall had altogether disappeared, and in place of these were garlands of leafy vines, so closely interwoven and so brilliantly green in the sun as to give to the asymmetrical mass of weathered grayish palm, and the strangling green, a strange beauty. Not quite two years ago it had been abandoned, and soon it would be completely lost to the bush.

But the villagers looked the other way when we photographed it.

A little to one side of the house with the doorposts which showed the Granman's crests was a smaller hut, before [789] whose door stretched a magic azang of palm fronds that marked it as a shrine.

[796] "This house is for the Apuku gods," said an old woman who heard our inquiry. "It belongs to me. It was built when my god told me to make it."

And without hesitation she led the way under the palm fronds through the opening.

This was the first time we had been permitted to enter a closed shrine. We had had descriptions of shrines from men with whom we had talked of the gods. There were some,

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Chapter XIV

GRANMAN MOANA YANKUSO

I

114 WHATEVER the rôle of the great man in the life of a people, there are names whose very mention bring up almost full-bodied an epoch, a great dynamic sweep of human thought and activity, of achievement, and sometimes of disaster. Perhaps the great individual does not exist until the poetic vision of a people gives to the skeleton of a name the flesh of a godhead. From earliest times and from people of varying civilizations have come down tales of these godheads, created, let us say if we like, out of a psychic need in the life of human beings to exalt personality in order that, imaginatively at least, the chasm between desire and insufficiency might be spanned.

●643 159 In the council house of Granman Yankuso, as we listened to his stories, these thoughts constantly recurred to us, and it is not strange, therefore, that now as we try to collect images and impressions of the man for an objective picture of him not only as a Bush Negro but as an individual, we think of him as typifying among the Negroes of the Saramacca today such a name and such a personality.

Already Moana Yankuso was something of a myth among the people of the coastal region and among his own people.

[159] Men on the coast said, "Granman Yankuso is a silent man. You will be with him for days, and he will never utter a word."

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GRANMAN MOANA YANKUSO

"Granman Yankuso is the tallest man on the river, and the darkest," they said. "He speaks little. When he is angry, his growl strikes terror in all who hear him."

People said, "The Granman is a clever man. You can tell him about your work in the way you would speak to your own educated men, and he will understand you."

"They will take away everything you have up there on the river."

"They will never bring you to the Granman. He will see to it."

In the villages of the Saramacca country we heard again and again proverbs he had originated, which were quoted when men told of this almost mythical personality.

"The Granman says, 'No one must die, but the burial place cannot lie idle,'" Bayo once quoted him.

"What does it mean, Bayo?"

"It is deep, white man. The Granman is wise."

Kasanya once quoted another of the Granman's proverbs. "If the gods say take one step at a time, do not stand still, and take two steps the next time in anger."

On this river they told us that Granman Moana Yankuso knew all that went on. It was a kind of magic he had: whatever men did anywhere, he knew.

And they said, too, that men were afraid to cross him, not alone because of his rank, but because his spirits were strong.

2

It is difficult to be objective about Moana Yankuso. In the terms his own people use, the explanation of his personality would be the explanation given of any other.

"He has strong gods."

If we urged them to explain what were the gods of a man they were praising, they would describe the Tiger spirit the man had, and what knowledge of healing and future events his Opete obia, his buzzard spirit, gave him, and how he had come by a special obia which had passed down to him from a famous magician of the earliest times.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
[illegible] Bush Negroes [illegible]
Saramacca

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In our own terms, if we were to picture the Granman as a splendid savage, cheerful, guileless, childlike, flattered by our interest, we would be belying his gifts of sophistication, and he would thank us little for these romantic outlines which, according to the values of his own civilization, would be insulting.

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The code of life among these people was expressed in the proverb we had heard often spoken. "There are men on the upper river, there are men on the lower river, too." For survival in this bush, a man needed to match his strength and his wits and his magic, his kindliness and his enmity against those of any other. And the Bush Negro is a realist, for, as we had seen, not even the gods could be depended upon to be consistent—consistently good or consistently evil. The Bush Negro's gods, like humans, often did things for unaccountable reasons, because of a momentary whim, because of a desire to try the untried.

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It was good to be guileless, but sometimes a man had to be a tiger, had to stalk his prey from behind. It was well enough to be a tiger, but sometimes a man needed the cunning of the bush hero, spider Anansi, who knew how to outwit the tiger. It was well enough to be an eagle, and be free and fly high, but sometimes a man needed the wit of the little bird konubri, who became king of all birds, because, when in the kingdom of birds there was a contest for the throne, it was he who, by perching on the back of the eagle, flew highest of all.

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In the simplest of our own terms, Granman Moana Yankuso could be said to be a superb politician. In his villages, marriage alliances were calculated with the nicety of the best statesmanship. Whatever his own views, he saw to it that he never defied the arbiters of magic or the clan of the seat of magic, the Dahomey people. Toward the women of strange villages who came to see the white man and his woman, he showed an easy gallantry, which could not have been but flattering. When addressing the women who carried children astride their backs, he would speak gently to them and call them "mother" in greeting, and

J. Herskovits & Herskovits E-6 (1929-1929) 1934
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for the young girls he had the cavalier address of "wenki," possibly the English word wench under its seventeenth century connotation of young woman.

We had, thanks to the gods, perhaps, never seen him in the rôle of tiger, unless his parting krutu with the four Gankwe men could be said to symbolize its mood, if not its manner. To suggest that any full-grown Bush Negro—a man who had Kromanti—would be incapable, when need arose, of being the tiger, would, of course, be looked upon as the deepest affront.

But Moana Yankuso was more than an astute politician. Using our own values again, we admired his vitality, his dignity, his robust imagination, his wit. Perhaps what struck us particularly about him, when we came to know him in situations with his own people, was that here was a man who in intellect and will towered so much above those who were about him that he was a lonely figure. His age had become something of a myth, too. People said he was seventy, that he was more than that, that he was scarcely sixty. We had never seen his head without the covering kerchief, so that it was difficult to form any definite impression about his years. But in strength he was still a colossus, though it was not true that he was the tallest or the strongest or the darkest man on the river. His own son-in-law, Wilhelmina's husband, was perhaps a head taller than he, as was the drummer at Akisiamau, who had played the agida for us. We had seen him, cutlass in hand, clearing a path for us through the underbrush with amazing rapidity, as the courteous gesture of a host who wanted to insure our bathing in privacy. Had the underbrush been of papier-mâché, he could not have swung his strokes more surely or more tellingly.

Above all else, however, Granman Moana Yankuso was a magnificent talker, a fine story-teller. What we give of his conversations, and what incidents we describe, may suggest something of his personality. His full story will never be written.

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[illegible] Bush Negroes [illegible]
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"Tell me this," said Granman Yankuso to us one evening when we sat alone with him in the council house, "why is it that things have changed so in the city? I am not a young man. For years I came to the city, and when I met Negro women of the town going to market or coming from market, they were dressed in full skirts. They looked well. Now the women dress in straight dresses like men. Straight up and down and short. They want to look like white people.

"Years ago when I came to the city, I used to hear Negroes laugh. It is good to hear laughter. Now they are trying to be like the whites. They do not laugh. That is not good. It would be better if white people laughed more, too.

"Why do Negroes want to turn into white people? Look, is my skin like yours? Is my daughter's hair like yours, white woman? If you put on a pangi, you will not look like my daughter. You, white man, are as tall as Captain And'u. If you put on a cloth over one shoulder, you will not look like And'u. . . .

"A man came to me in the city and said he wanted to go to Dahomey. He wore no obias. He was a white man's Negro. I said he couldn't go to Dahomey. The man said, 'Look, my skin is as black as yours.' 'Ai, but your heart isn't.'

"You know why I said it? There is your kind of magic, white man, and there is our kind of magic. White man's magic keeps men in cities, but here in the bush a man needs black man's magic to keep alive and black man's strength to go up and down the rivers.

"You white men have books. You read in books, and you know. I cannot read what men write, yet I can read in my own way. I meet a man, and I can read him. I look at him, and I know what he is thinking. Before he begins to talk, I know what he wants to say. What your ancestors knew they put down in books, and you read it. What our ancestors know, they tell us at night, they tell us in the cool of the

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morning, they tell us when we call on them. That is the black man's way.

"You white people have money, you have fine houses, you wear clothes, you can count. They tell me that you say in your books all people must be friends. But you have wars. If white people kill white people, then *mati*—friend—how will it be with black people living among the whites?"

Granman Yankuso rose, when he said this, and took from the chains of the suspended lamp a folded envelope. He handed it to us, and from it we took out a letter on the stationery of the League of Nations, signed by its Secretary, Sir Eric Drummond. As we were reading this, he left the council house and soon returned with a larger envelope, which he had kept uncreased, and from it brought out a photograph of the Council of the League of Nations in session. They were his proud possessions. While the World War lasted there was no work for the Bush Negroes on the river. They could not earn the money they needed to buy cloths for marrying and powder and rum for ceremonial usage. The Bush Negroes called it a "great money famine," in the way of their Anansi stories which so often began with "This was a time of great famine." Through a missionary on the upper river, the Granman learned of the war, and through him later of the League, which the missionary had undoubtedly brought up as the white man's defense against the challenge of the black tribal head, who asked, "How will it be with black people living among the whites?"

It was then that the Granman through this same missionary addressed himself to the white rulers far away, telling of the fear of the blacks, and counseling them the wisdom of peace!

4

In the council house Granman Moana Yankuso was host to the Gankwe men. They were there to take their leave of him before starting down river. Asikanu, the handsome brother of the Gankwe clan head, who was sent away from his village while the elders were deciding upon his adultery

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fine, sat between Sedefo, whose bench was moved forward a little, and Angita. The younger men sat with bodies half-turned toward the wall, out of respect for the Granman, the older ones, with their faces averted from him.

The Granman was speaking, telling a story.

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"Ai, mati . . . " he said, in his precise, formal way, laying stress on each syllable, "in our bush, the gods be praised, men are men. There was a man near here, who saw a woman he liked, and he took her. He had a loving eye, he was young. Ai, mati, what is a beating to a man when he is young? But the proverb says, 'All that is in the darkness will come to light.' Dealings with women always come to light too soon. That man got a beating, mati! He came out into the clearing, his head held high, like any man whom young girls follow with their eyes. But waiting for him was the husband of the woman, and the men of his family, and. . . . "

"Well, so it is, G'ama'," said Sedefo, with the careful modulation which showed that he, too, was schooled in the way of the important councils.

"Ya-hai, G'ama'," said Asikanu, more briefly.

Granman Yankuso now went on with his story, bringing to his recital all the detail of the punishment of the adulterer, without quickening the telling of his story even when he spoke the words which described the sound of the blows.

"Yes, master of the realm," said Sedefo, his head still averted, but leaning his body forward a little as he spoke, so that he somewhat shielded Asikanu from the direct gaze of the Granman, yet managing this clever gesture so that it had the air of rapt interest.

"Kere-kere, G'ama'," Asikanu breathed, almost inaudibly.

As the Granman recounted his tale, Asikanu's spine twitched as though every blow mentioned was that instant being leveled at him, as though he himself were lying head down in the dust of the clearing, while blows rained down upon him, and the Kromanti iron bands cut gashes into his proud face and arms and body.

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But Sedefo, splendid actor that he was, betrayed in no way that he was aware of his friend's discomfiture, except that his interpolations became more and more spirited, balancing in the intensity of his voice the formality of the Granman's speech.

"True, true!" he said, with excitement.

"By Ando, G'ama'!"

When the tale was finished, the Granman became reminiscent. In his youth he had been like the rest. What did it mean to be a man and not to assert one's manhood when a handsome woman was to be had? He was on the Marowyne then. Did they want to beat him? He had said, "Very well." As many as wished could come at him—but one at a time.

As he spoke now, he clenched his fist and struck the table with it so that the table shook and the guns which lay underneath it rattled.

He was no longer young, but his answer to people who threatened would still be the same, he continued.

"Tell them that everywhere on the river, mati," he finished with a smile, and he cleared his throat as a signal for the bassia to come and pour out drinks for his visitors, before they left his village.

And how was their clan head who had been ailing? he asked, with friendly solicitude.

5

Granman Yankuso was telling about his great ancestors. He looked particularly well that night. His smock-like coat was a deep blue, and over it was a print of orange and black worn toga fashion.

There was Bagida, one of the first to escape to the bush, and Dosi who made the Kasito clan, and Ajako who was a Matchau Negro, a man of the Granman's own clan, and it was he who had fought against the whites and had freed his people. There were Mother Bedu, and Mother Fakia, and the great Abini family which bore Alabi, whom the peccary had helped to freedom, so that Alabi's people, the Awana Negroes, to this day did not eat pingo.

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gave rise to another Bush Negro nation known as the *Boni* tribe. There are also three other tribes today of less importance: the *Matawai* on the Upper Saramacca River, the *Quinter-Matawai* which is a sub-tribe on the Copenam, and the *Paramacca* on the Middle Marowyne with villages on both the French and Dutch sides of the river.

The tribal divisions are strictly enforced. Not only is intermarriage forbidden, but each tribe has its separate government, and each is referred to locally as a "river nation." Each tribe likewise has its own territory, and any poaching by hunters, fishers, or balata bleeders is rigorously punished. The ruler of the tribe is a king, or *granman*. Among the photographs is one of old Jankoeso, the kindly shrewd ruler of the Saramaccaner nation; the Aucaner ruler, Amekti, has just died, his place probably being taken by Matodja. The Boni granman is named Awensai.

The largest tribe is the Saramaccaner, with a population of about 14,000. Their village of Santi Gron (Sandy Ground), some twenty miles from Paramaribo on the Lower Saramacca River is the nearest of all Djuka villages to white civilization. But the main body of this tribe begins some ninety miles up the Surinam River from Paramaribo, and the villages are strung along the Surinam River for a hundred or more miles further on back into the interior. The names of some of these villages are: Nu Condree, Lombe, Gansee, Biodoti, Adawai, De Jun, Masumba Pratti, and Dahomey, and other towns of even more picturesque appellations: Boto-Passi, Poki Gron, Granman Condree, and many more.

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361 posely to make the village as hard to reach as possible, to protect it from white invaders. From long experience the [648] Djukas mistrust all white men.

643 In Jankoeso is lodged the general authority over the Saramaccaner tribe and the territory in which they live. He has forbidden the intrusion of any visitors unless they are announced several days beforehand, by messenger.

[428] All the Granmans receive their title by matrilineal inheritance, and cannot be deposed. When one dies he is succeeded by his oldest sister's oldest male child, while his own sons never, under any circumstances, succeed him to the kingship. If there is no such person as his oldest sister's senior male child, then the succession passes on to the oldest male child of the nearest female relative. If the line dies out, and no [666 relatives are eligible, the successor is elected by popular vote 622] from among the captains of the river villages, but this seldom occurs. On such an occasion there may be a struggle between different lo, playing politics to get into power. Otherwise inheritance is strictly through the female line.

648 The Dutch government exerts only a nominal control over the Bush Negro tribes of the interior. Once every year the river Granmans come down the broad river highways to Paramaribo for a parley with the Governor of Surinam. After a ten-day canoe trip downstream, Jankoeso finds a train waiting for him at Kabel, to bring him ceremonially the rest of the way. The other rulers must come all the way by corial. On their long and often hazardous journey they are accompanied by their most powerful captains. The Gran-

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a prisoner, and refusing to take the special train awaiting him at Kabel. Special trains, he said, were not for prisoners. He was paddled the additional ninety miles in his own corial, which took six days longer. Very vexed at this, the Governor did not shake hands with him, and Jankoeso was offended. "Why doesn't he tell me 'Howdy'?" he asked Mynheer Wolff, who is always instrumental in furthering friendly relations between Dutch and Djukas. Wolff called the Governor outside, and advised him to treat the Granman with more cordiality. The necessary handshaking was done, and the parley continued more affably. The guilty one was apprehended and jailed for a year. Once again there went upstream the annual present of the Dutch government to each Granman. This is a continuation of the custom of tribute money paid to the Bush Negroes ever since the days of the black rebellions. Every year each Granman receives 1500 guilders.

The Granman is the actual chief of the river nation, but the government centres in the village proper. The village is governed by a headman or *captain*, and aiding him in his work is a council or *bosseia*, consisting of three or four or more of the most mature men and women of the town. "Bosseia," like the American colloquial *boss*, comes from the Dutch word *baas*. Here the rough justice of the jungle is administered, and local disputes are settled. Here decisions are made concerning the ownership of timber, and property rights in cassava fields. Quarrels over women are more frequent than any other kind of disputes, and they, too, are settled by the village captain and his bosseia.

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and does not look with favour upon the white proselytizers.

The Granman can call a meeting of his captains at any time. They must attend, even though it involves days of rigorous travel. Although the captains look up to the Granman and acknowledge him as their superior, the connexion between them is not close enough to be considered a hierarchy. The "river nations" are not monarchies in any sense. The only laws promulgated by the Granman are those that affect the entire tribe.

Neither the captains nor the Granman have any privileges or prerogatives to set them apart from the undistinguished natives; there is no leisure class. They are all dependent upon their own efforts to earn a living, and work like anyone else in the village. Rank does not make social parasites out of them, as among us. The Granman's only external distinction is that sent by the white man, the tribute from the Dutch government. The type of social organization now prevalent among the Djukas, therefore, may be described as primitive communism.

The Aucaner, second in number to the Saramaccaner, are scattered in a less compact way over the rivers and creeks of the colony toward the French Guiana line. This tribe numbers about 6000 in population.

Just below the realm of the Saramaccaner tribe, at the junction of the Sara Creek and the Surinam River (see map facing page), are some of the Aucaner villages: Koffay Camp, Lebbi Doti, Lasa Baka, Pitchong, Baku, and other settlements. There are few villages on the long Sara Creek, but

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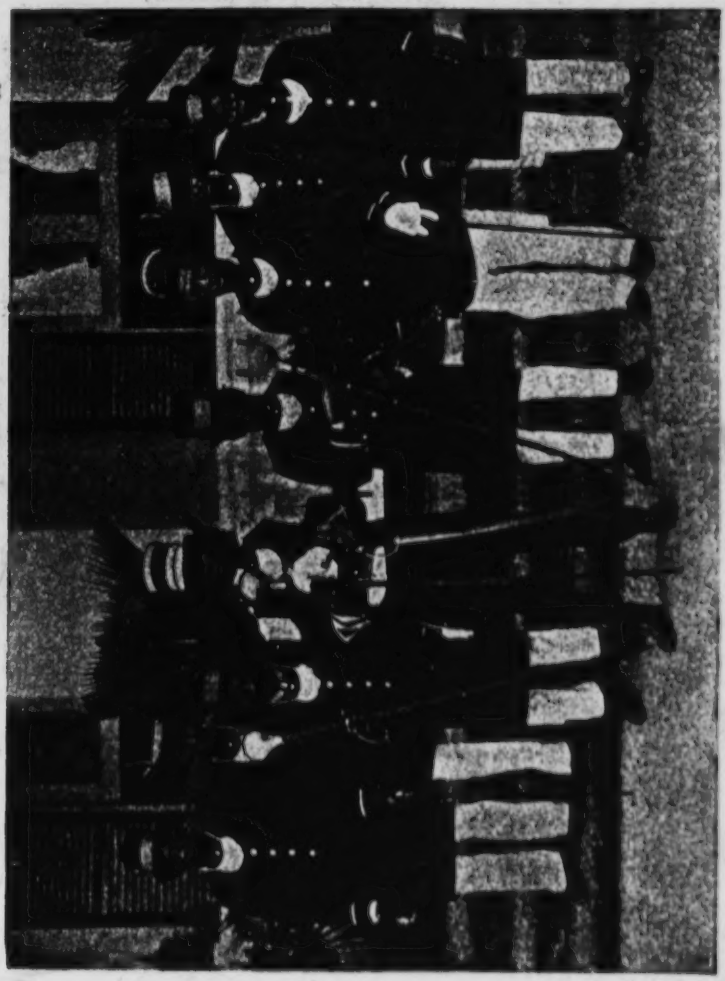

Granmans and Captains Assembled in Paramaribo for a Council with the Governor of Dutch Guiana.
Photo by Curiel

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Boni

tribe of the Bush Negroes which owes allegiance to the French. They have never forgiven the Dutch for their relentless pursuit back in the old rebel days. Several years ago the Dutch authorities made an effort to invite the Bonis back into Dutch territory; these overtures, however, were flatly refused.

The derivation of the word "Boni" makes for interesting speculation, and three theories have been advanced to explain it. The first is that the word is derived from the French phrase "Bon Negre" or "Good Negroes" which the colonists of French Guiana applied to the Boni blacks because they were comparatively quiet and peaceful. It is also possible that the tribe may have been named after their famous rebel leader Bonny, who took such a formidable and prominent part in the rebellions. Thirdly, it has been considered that the name was derived from the Bonny River of West Africa, for undoubtedly some of the slaves came from that area. Although *B-o-n-i* is the official Dutch spelling of the word, when the tribesmen refer to themselves the accent is placed on the second syllable, and phonetically the word should be spelled *B-o-n-e-e* and pronounced much the same as the word *Pawnee*, the tribe of American Indians in the western United States. The Granman of this tribe, Awensai, receives his annual stipend from the Governor of French Guiana at Cayenne.

The first village of the Boni, situated on the French side of the Marowyne River, is that of Apatoo nestling at the foot of the Armina falls. The entire French side of the river from

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Jankoeso, Granman or King of the Saramaccaner Tribe, in Town for a Parley with the Governor.

Photo by Curiel

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It is indulged in as naturally as the other bodily functions.

"Marriage" is a convenient term for describing cohabitation among the Djukas, but it must be remembered that to them marriage is a purely economic institution. There is little ceremony. No one objects to getting married, because divorce is instantaneous and easy. The bonds of marriage are loose, and adultery, to use our harsh term, is customary.

Courting consists in presenting the prospective bride with elaborate wood carvings of useful implements. This wood carving has been developed by the Djukas to a high point of artistic perfection, as can be seen from the illustrative specimens, of which more will be said later. The approaching marriage is not looked upon as a departure from the maternal group; it is simply an arrangement for providing the man with a cook and the woman with children. The marriage of a captain or a Granman differs in no wise from any other; no especial care is taken of his bride.

We encountered two varieties of the process of choosing a husband. In the first, the girl has little to say, her husband being selected for her by her parents. In the second and more frequent practice the woman marries the man of her own choice, the parents making sure that the intended husband is a good provider. But since every Djuka buck is trained to the jungle crafts from childhood, this requirement can almost be taken for granted.

The husband marries frequently. He may marry outside of his village, or outside of his lo, but never outside of the tribe. Marriage requires a bride price, consisting of pieces of

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being able to accommodate their eyes to the tiny grey perspectives. When the significance of the chiaroscuro dawned upon them, they broke into broad grins and were mightily pleased. After that most of them readily consented to being photographed.

A woman was suspected of causing by witchcraft the death of the late Granman, Amekti, of the Aucaner tribe. She was severely beaten and was not allowed to attend the ceremony of *Broko Day* (breaking day), the time when mourning is broken.

Broko Day is held four or five months after the death of the Granman. Game is hunted and cassava cake prepared for many days prior to the great feast. It is a time of great festivity; there is dancing, singing, and general merrymaking. At this time the *Songai*, the *Pekein play*, and the *Susa* dances are held. The participants are generously smeared with pemba dotee and they wear costumes and decorations which are not seen at any other time. Then, as many of the tribe as is possible gather in the village of the erstwhile Granman, and the feast lasts for about a week. Dancing and feasting continue night and day. At this time the ageedah drum—six to eight feet tall—is played, as well as the smaller instruments already referred to. Toward the end of the ceremony, the hair and nails of the corpse are buried, a new Granman is inaugurated, and the deceased ruler is relegated to the position of an ancestor. Prayers may then ascend heaven-ward to him.

Captain Acrowsie of the Aucaner tribe told us some in-

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766 teresting things concerning burials. A Granman's or a cap-
643 tain's body is placed in a cave-like hole dug in the side of a
[622] hill, and is eventually sealed in. It is forbidden to throw dirt upon the bodies of such officials.

764 In the case of an ordinary person, a large hole is dug in the ground in which the corpse is lowered. A plank is placed over the body, so that the dirt subsequently thrown into the hole will not come into direct contact with the body.

766 The bodies of albinos, idiots, and lepers are otherwise disposed of. These people are supposed to be related to the river, and are called *watra pekein,* or water children. Instead of being allowed to rot, their bodies are placed in a pit dug in the bank when the river is low. When the water rises, the corpse is washed out of its temporary tomb.

769 Every year the azang pau, the palm barrier across the village path, is renewed, and at this time prayers are said for the dead. The dead person's relatives have shaved off their forelocks when he died, and often again at intervals of three, six, and nine months thereafter. But after the lapse of a year there is no mourning; a large dance is held to signify that the period is terminated, and after that the dead man or woman is relegated to the position of an ancestor. The prayers then ask him to intercede with the gods for the benefit of those still among the living.

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the white man has never been allowed to enter. A spirit named *Hini* hovers over the town, and it is he, not the Djukas, who would be offended by the presence of a bahkra. People seriously ill are brought to Dahomey from the surrounding villages. The witch doctors there, old women as well as old men, and occasionally a virgin, administer their potent charms. Only young married women are debarred from the profession of medicine among the Djukas.

Here also comes the Granman of the Saramaccaner tribe, to undergo the sacred ritual before making his annual visit to Paramaribo. He receives absolution from the Dahomey medicine men in preparation for his sojourn among the bahkras. The ceremony is known as *makee suka*, or putting himself in favour with the gods.

Our friend Abaisa, headman of Lombe, tells us something of the Dahomey rituals. To mend a broken bone the patient is shut up in a small hut with the doctor and three white cocks. The first fowl is killed by having its neck wrung, the blood from its beak running on the floor of the hut as a sacrifice to Amu, the ground god. The second fowl is cut open for inspection. If the bladder is light in colour the prognosis is good, but if dark the reverse is the case. The third cock has its leg bone broken at a point approximately corresponding to the patient's fracture. After this both the fowl and the human patient undergo daily treatment at the hands of the doctor, to the accompaniment of prayers to Amu and the shaking of rattles to scare off the evil spirits. The nature of the treatment could not be ascertained, but on the day when

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177 separated by ten thousand years of time and two thousand
182 miles of space. It has, however, been pointed out that both peoples had to face environmental conditions that are roughly alike, and that a similar world may well have led to certain similar responses and adaptations. In Dutch Guiana, on the other hand, we do know of a direct historical connexion with Africa, so that the customs, habits, art work, social organization, and general material culture of the Bush Negroes must undoubtedly be related to the similar culture of West Africa. A great many articles in everyday use among the Djukas are of West African design. African words and African habits can readily be identified.

177 We also know that certain articles used by the Djukas are borrowings from the aboriginal Indians of the district.
[252] Thus the cassava squeezer, the *matapee*, and the whole technique of preparing cassava, the grater and sieve for the flour, are borrowed from the South American Indians. But by far the greater part of Djuka culture comes directly from the Dark Continent.

A Swedish anthropologist, Gerhard Lindblom, made a study of Bush Negro implements and wood carvings in
[322] European museums, and compared them with the implements and wood carvings from West Africa, pointing out a number of homologous forms.

● [143 352] The Granman's throne, an intricately carved wooden stool made by the Djukas, as Lindblom pointed out, is similar in construction to those owned by the headmen of the Gold Coast, Ashanti, Slave Coast, and the Niger tribes. The ornate

/7 cont./

101 [175] [567] 4th. Bonnie /Boni/ Negroes, living on the river above Marowyne; until 1862 they were in a state of slavery among the Aucaners, but at that time, through the intervention of the government, they were released from it. Their name is supposed to be derived from a former runaway slave who had placed himself at their head.

Chapter III

Government, Laws, Administration of Justice

643 [292] Each of these tribes, except for the Bonnie Negroes, has a chief whom they call granman (governor); the uniform given to him by the government is a blue tunic with epaulets and a cocked hat with white plush.

Among the Aucaners the chief is called Byman, a cunning, courageous, and prudent man, around 63 years old.

The chief of the Saramaccaners is called Abram, an infirm old man who is very weak of character and has little influence.

The Mantoewari Negroes have a chief called Kalkoen, who, although aged and infirm, can nonetheless still be called firm of character.

631 /8/ Under their chief they have a certain number of captains and council members. The former are divided into bush captains, who take command in case of war, and into house or land captains, who deal with internal matters with the chief. The token [554] of their prestige given to them by the government consists of a large staff with a round silver ball (drum-major's stick), on which is the Netherlands coat of arms with "Je maintiendrai."

344 They have a large open shed which serves them as court and which they call kroetoehoso (probably derived from the English "courthouse").

682 Their legislation is very limited. One who kills another is punished with death; one who poisons someone suffers death by torture, provided that substantial irrefutable proof exists. (See Chapter XI below.) If the death penalty is not appropriate, the

/137 cont./

241 and sugar cane, while in the third year some pineapples, bananas, and sugar cane are also harvested.

Thereafter one surrenders the ground to the second growth (kapoeweri) shooting up, here called "kauwé," and to the weeds, like the cutting grass "haboen nefi" (Scleria secans), which prevent further growth of the cultivated crop.

This system of clearing grounds requires much land. It is a severely predatory cultivation which can only be employed when sufficient free land is available. Only after many years can one return to the same piece of forest to lay out a new ground, depending on the recovery of the forest, more particularly on the top growth.

[592] Among the Bush Negroes of the Marowijne it is the rule that
[476] each household provide for itself. The man clears the ground with help of family /familie/ members or friends, who in return for food are taken in during this time. If the man has /138/ one wife, then ordinarily two grounds per year are cleared; if he has more than one wife, then he clears two grounds for each wife.

[622] The captain /kapitein/ of a village lays out his ground him-
[643] self, helped by his villagers. The granman /chief/, however, does not work himself, but, regardless of the number of his wives, has his family and other helpers clear grounds in return for food for the
423 workdays. The products of the grounds of a household are not joint
593 property, but rather the wife asserts her rights over the produce from one ground, while the man claims that from the other ground. Thus a distinction is made between the agrarian property of the wife and that of the husband.

3. The Plague of Ants and the Ant-bushes

241
825 In the agriculture of the Bush Negroes the plague of ants plays a significant role. The leaf-cutting or parasol ants (Atta sexdens and Atta cephalotes) are very destructive because of their attacks on the leaves in the plantings. The first-named species is the greatest evildoer in the interior districts of Surinam. Cassava in

/141 cont./

241 of this predatory cultivation has been reached. The nearby
423 agricultural lands are kept in use with too brief a rest period, with
[134] the result that the soil is overworked and the periodic recovery
[825] of the forest proceeds at an ever slower pace. In addition one struggles to an increasing degree with the problem /142/ of the leaf-cutting ants, which keep the easily accessible places occupied.

241 The consequence of this circumstance is that the Bush Negroes
311 are forced to make the grounds farther and farther from their vil-
[484] lages. One travels for hours up or down the river in order to
[42] reach good land. When one cannot make good use of a forest creek in order to transport the produce from the field, one is forced to carry the harvest for one or two hours through the forest to the river. The Bush Negro does not go farther than a two hours' walk (about six kilometers from the river) (see the map /see p. 13 /).

241 On the Tapanahoni one spends even days in traveling to less
311 populated areas in order to plant and to harvest. One then estab-
361 lishes so-called work camps along the river, from which one
[103] operates in the surrounding areas. This is the case, among others, between Godoholo and Granbori for people from Drietabbetje or
811 other centers. That one does not go even farther up river, all the
423 way past the last village, Granbori, has to do with a prohibition
643 by the granman of the Aucaners. That is, the latter want to reserve the lands lying beyond this point as hunting lands and therefore will not make them available for agricultural purposes.

241 The inhabitants of the villages along the lower Tapanahoni,
311 such as Saïd, Clemenzi, and Malobbi, frequently lay out their food
423 grounds in the Lawa, where they can have at their disposal agri-
361 cultural lands as far as the Aboenasoengoe Falls. Farther upstream
103 on this river the Boni or Aloekoe Negroes assert their rights.

5. Differences between Aucaners and Paramaccaners

101 The conditions given above apply in the main to the Aucaner
162 Bush Negroes of the Tapanahoni. They number today approximately
[311] 6,500 persons. The Paramaccaner Bush Negroes of the Marowijne, approximately 1,700 in number, are in somewhat more favorable

/510 cont./

relatives, nor any power of the man over the woman, nor even household cohabitation. The man and the woman each reside in the village of their maternal kin. The man goes to live with his wife from time to time, providing her with the imported commodities that she needs, notably salt, kerosene, cloth, and utensils, and felling trees for the clearings which she will exploit for the benefit of the household.

Divorce is entirely free. Unions are not very stable, mainly on account of the woman. Numbers of women are divorced four to five times during their lives.

The grand man, chief of the tribe, exercises over the Boni a power which is more religious than political.

The Boni are a pirogue-people. For more than a century they have been living by using their canoes for the benefit of gold-seekers and exploiting miners. The decline of gold extraction is depriving them more and more of their traditional resources. Some of them are emigrating temporarily to the coastal lumberyards. But all of them remain faithful to their villages and to their customs.

/511/

The Guyana Indians (Roucouyennes /Rucuyen/). These Indians of the Caribe /Caribi/ ethnic group have had only a few direct contacts with European civilization and still represent without alteration the human type which populated Guiana before the arrival of the Europeans. On encountering the Refugee Blacks, the Indians of the Guianese forest have been steadily and rapidly declining. Estimated at 40,000 at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Indians of French Guiana are now no more than about a thousand. In addition there must be included in this number 700 persons (Galibi and Arawaks) who have been protected by their habitat in the savannas of the coast where malaria is less deadly than in the interior.

The accounts of travelers and the censuses made notably in 1730, 1759, 1787, and 1815 allow one to follow with precision this destruction of the autochthonous population since the first settlement of the Europeans in Guiana (2).

2. Dr. André Sausse, op. cit., pp. 67-98.

/15/

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE BONI

Villages

[3] [361] [133] Localization. The principal Boni villages have for 150 years been grouped on the Lawa (1) upstream from Abattis-Cottica Falls.

> 1. Let us remember that the Lawa and the Tapanahoni are the streams forming the Maroni. The Lawa constitutes the border between Surinam and French Guiana.

The limit of Boni country toward the south is vague. However, it is taken for granted that all the Abattis-Cottica belong [361] to the Boni. Boni farming villages and Djuka villages coexist downstream from the Abattis-Cottica as far as Abounasounga. Below Abounasounga begins Djuka country properly speaking (2).

> 2. In reality this is a zone of colonization, for the "great country" of the Djuka is the Tapanahoni. But the customary rights they possess on the Lawa lands are contested by no one.

[423] [43] [131] Traditionally, the Boni used to consider the whole of the upper basin of the Maroni as their domain or at the very least as territory under the authority of the grand man. Thus it was at

/15 cont./ Thus it was at
423 the time of the Lawa gold rushes (1890) that Grand Man Anato
643 caused rent to be paid by the Creole miners who were settling in
[648] the region. But this practice, excessive when the small portion of this territory actually occupied by the Boni is considered, ended
423 up by falling into disuse. Nowadays things have fallen into the
648 opposite extreme, and the Boni find themselves having no right,
178 customary or otherwise, over the country of their ancestors; the first comer, even of the Creoles from the British West Indies, can settle anywhere, dislocating the apportionment of the land among lineages. This situation has been harmful to the life of the tribe by contributing to the scattering of the peopling. Perhaps it is not too late to remedy the situation. An /16/ /Figure 2 appears here./ /17/ African tribe cannot live wholesomely if there are no definite relationships, entailing unquestioned rights, between the group and the land.

423 The following modus vivendi has been in force for many
619 years:

[486] a) The Djuka may circulate freely across Boni country, but
[166] they may not establish villages in it; if they wish to make clearings there, they must ask for permission from the grand man.
[226] Otherwise they have the right to fish on the Tanpok and the Wahi.

423 b) The Creoles may settle anywhere and make their clear-
648 ings where the lands are not used. But that does not modify in the minds of the Boni the lineages' rights over the land; this occupation is regarded as creating no new right; for example, the Doglis habitation is built on the lands of Kormotibo village.

423 c) The Boni reserve for themselves along with the Oayana
648 Indians the exclusive right to fish on the Litani and the Maruini.
822 On these rivers the Djuka do not have the right to penetrate.
[619] The Boni may be computed at a little less than 1,000 persons
162 all told.

/17 cont./

101 103 175 113

1. Archives du Ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer, Guyane /Archives of the Ministry of Overseas France, Guiana/, A3-02.

611 /18/ Villages and Kin Groups

Among all the kinship systems which existed in the African tribes from which they issued, the Refugee Blacks came back unanimously, and from the beginning, to matrilineal filiation.

571 613 643 Their social system is symbiosis, under the authority of the grand man, of a certain number of localized matrilineal kin groups.

613 Matrilineal kin groups of the Boni. With the Boni the basic grouping is the lineage, in the rigorous sense of the term, understanding by that all descendants in maternal line from a single ancestress.

To designate the kin groups the Boni employ almost interchangeably the words lo (troop, band) and bɛ̀ɛ̀, womb. In fact these expressions correspond to two variant interpretations of the same notion.

614 bɛ̀ɛ̀: matrilineage in the widest sense, understanding by that all persons knowing that they are issue of the same ancestress, even if the genealogical ties are forgotten, and even if these persons are scattered in several villages under different authorities;

lo: lineage fraction grouped in one village and constituting a distinct social unit.

The lineage bears a name whose origin is forgotten by present-day Boni; some of these names allude to a plantation or to a slave-owner, for example Lapé (La Paix: a plantation of the Cottica River); as for others, the name of the founding ancestress may be involved. Example: Kawina (name of the lineage constituting the village of Papaïkou).

/18 cont./

613 [621] Six lineages (1) of ancient founding are counted among the

[178] 1. It seems that in the past there was a greater number of groups (they continue to use the expression twalffuyu lo, the 12 lo, to designate the Boni nation), but some have died out.

Boni: all, with one single exception, have remained effective groupings corresponding each one to a village: for these lineages the words bɛ́ and lo may be used indiscriminately. The seventh, Dipélu, is distributed in three villages under different authorities, that is, forms three lo.

[614] The lo possesses a head (hedeman or captain). The bɛ́ possesses neither head nor organization, but as we shall show, its members are united by religious ties and meet to celebrate common rites.

(See table on the following page.)

• [643] The head of the Dikan lo is supreme chief -- grand man -- of the Boni.

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10	Village of residence	Head in 1958
Dikan	Boniville village	Difu (grand man)
Dju	Asisi village; a small group in Boniville	Adiiso
Lapé	Loka and Lapé Tabiki villages; a small group in Boniville	Popo
Dipélu I	l'Enfant Perdu and Apatu villages; a small group in Boniville	Sabun (l'Enfant Perdu) Saka (Apatu)
Dipélu II	Kormotibo village; a fraction in Alisi	Poopu
Kotika (Yabubi)	Kotika village; a group in Abunawinga	Nachinengé
Papaïston (Kawina)	Papaïston village; a small group in Boniville a small group in the Lower Maroni (Wétiti village)	Tafanié

/22 cont./

613 Situation of the lineages in 1958.

●[643] The Dikan lineage, whose head is the grand man of the Boni, has practically died out, since it is comprised of only Grand Man Difu: upon his death it will totally disappear (1).

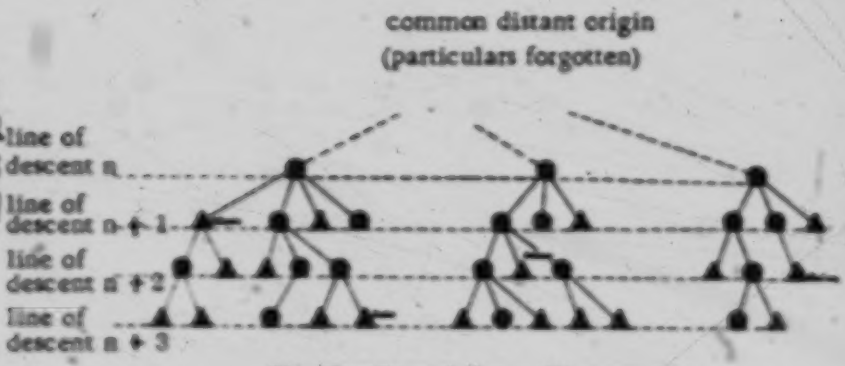

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Fig. 3. Extended matrilineage.

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1. Note that a Dikan lo exists among the Djuka: the separation of the Dikan-Djuka and the Dikan-Boni is necessarily anterior to the battles of 1793, which shows the ancientness of these groups.

621 For two generations the various lineages have delegated some
613 of their members /23/ to the grand man to conserve a certain im-
571 portance for his village. Thus Agodé (Boniville) now includes fragments of the Kotika, Dipélu, Lapé, Dju, and Papaïton lineages, forming that many individualized small quarters in the village.

/35 cont./

593 This organization, compared with what is found in the
greater part of Africa, is very advantageous for the wife, who
[581] enjoys total independence. But against this she has great instability
of unions.

581 The union of man and woman has so little of the character
601 of a marriage that in the Boni language no word exists which
means, strictly speaking, "husband" or "wife." They say: mi
ubi anga X = "I live with So-and-so.

1174 How has the social and matrimonial system of the Refugee
591 Blacks been set up? One could believe that one of the systems
of Western Africa was purely and simply transposed, but this is
not the case at all. In this domain as in that of beliefs, the an-
cestors of the Refugee Blacks elaborated an original synthesis out
of numerous sources.

The African nations from which the rebels issued were cer-
tainly, in large part if not in the majority, patrilineal. This is
especially the case of the Fon of Dahomey, from whom have been
borrowed important cultural elements, especially the principal
cults of possession. The matrilineal ones all conceded patrilocal
residence, that is, the wife's leaving her village and settling in
her husband's village.

[1175] The 18th-century rebels, the archives attest, included a
heavy percentage of "salt-water Negroes," born on African soil;
such, for example, was Codio Coromantin, one of Boni's lieuten-
ants; those who had not been born in Africa had, for the most part,
been instructed in an African tradition by a father or uncle. One
can be sure that once having attained freedom they sought to or-
ganize their villages according to the family custom by which
they had been brought up, that is, to set up, some a patrilineal
and patrilocal society, others a matrilineal society /36/ but with
patrilocal residence. We know for example that Boni had chosen
[642] for [illegible] Agosu as his successor.

/36 cont./

1174 671 The formation of patrilineages must have been hampered by numerous divorces; in addition, in case of divorce, the wife unquestionably aspired to take her children with her, not recognizing any contract between the two groups of kin which might be able to affect her free will; one can also be certain that the children, if consulted, must have followed their mother in most cases and [586] joined their maternal kin group. This tendency remains perfectly observable in our day; we shall see all its importance when we study how the children are raised and what tutelage is exercised upon them.

Now there is no patrilineage conceivable if, in case of divorce, the children do not stay with the father. Patrilineal societies exist in which the wife is free, were it only the Peule society, where divorces are very frequent. But African custom has it that in a patrilineal system, by reason of payment of the dowry, the wife's kin lose all rights over the children. They have entered the man's kin group and his ancestral cult.

The formation of matrilineal and patrilocal groupings must also have collided with analogous difficulties, the women not willingly leaving their village of origin.

One can rather easily imagine that in the initial period of the formation of the /37/ new tribes, the different matrimonial systems coexisted; then the patrilocal groups, less viable, progressively broke up, while the present custom was being established.

175 683 This point of view is confirmed by an exact piece of information collected at the end of the 19th century by the explorer Coudreau. Upon the death of Agosu, son of Boni, it was his son Gongo who succeeded him. But after the death of Gongo, the succession went according to the matrilineal system.

583 Another important aspect of the matrimonial system of the [591] Refugee Blacks is the absence of any compensation or payment. Even if it happens that a woman leaves her lineage permanently in order to settle in her husband's village and found a family there

/441/

Bonnville

Legend

№		House of		№		House of	
1	△	Dédo grand man	Dikan	31	○	Pétai	P1, F34
2	△	Dodoya	Dip. 1, F82	32	△	Gonisuta (2nd house)	
3	○	Kulina	Dja, F9	33			
4	△	Fintiman	Dja, F6	34	△	Baala	L2, E56
5	△	Klémenti	Dja, F7	35	○	Lomé	L2, F74
6	○	Eliana	Dja, F8	36	○	Térésa	L2, E57
7	○	Kulina	Dja, F9	37	△	Amakti	L2, F71
8	△	Doni	Dja, G13	38	△	Mompé	1. Poti
9	△	Lota	K3, E142	39	○	Aboomáki	
9(a)	△	Booki	K3, E133	40	△	Klémenti	Dja, F7
10	○	Mimi	K3, E156	41	○	Amékiwan	1. Poti
11	○	Lémiki	K3, D130	42	○	Léya	K2, F99
12	△	Tofioto	K3, E157	43	○	Paata	1. Poti
13	△	Lebiman	K3, D132	44	○	Chima	1. Poti
14	○	Achiké	K3, E140	45	○	Lémina	K2, F69
15	○	Soeto	K3, E142	46	△	Todo	K2, F68
16	○	Maka	K3, E146	47	○	Awini	K1, E37
17	○	Marta	K3, F140	48	△	Todo	K2, F68
18	○	Waway	K3, E130	49	△	Noël	Dip. 1, F83
19				50	△	Kallawa	1. Poti
20	○	Afingi	K3, D120	51	○	Bada	Dip. 1, F1
21	○	Akyéniki	K3, E144	52	△	Madéka	K2, E69
22	△	Makalanchi	K3, F130	53	○	Amanichi	Dip. 1, F7
23	△	Sintamann	K3, E145	54	○	Cécilia	Dip. 1, E9
24	△	Antéryt	P1, G25	55	△	Dyakata	Dip. 1, E4
25	△	Bakuman	P1, F22	56	△	Alichi	Dip. 1, F5
26	○	Apinda	P1, G96	57	○	Anuné	Dip. 1, F2
27	△	Gonisuta	P1, G64	58			
28	○	Alaouni	P1, F34	59	○	Léya	K2, F99
29	△	Bénano	P1, G61	60	△	Todo	K2, F68
30	△	Nango	P1, G31				

Total on January 1, 1958: 116 persons, including 43 children and adolescents of less than 16 years.

Adult inhabitants whose residence in Bonville is not normal: none.

The members of the small Poti lineage, founded about 50 years ago by a Djuka woman, wife of grand man Ochi†, have normal residence here through their foundress. No Djuka, Saramaka, or Paramaka lives in Bonville.

/63 cont./

that he can protect himself only by submitting to the law of the group. In this doubtless must be seen the deep reason for the importance attached to death and mourning, events around which is centered the activity of the usual societies and which entail a veritable mobilization.

It would be very difficult to condense the custom of the Refugee Blacks into a rigorous code. If one wished to do it, one would have to write as Article 1: "The living will conform to the will of the gods and the ancestors as it is expressed through the mouths of those possessed and by the movements of the bearers of the dead."

Each one of the tribes of the Refugee Blacks is formed of a certain number of matrilineages.

There is no limit on the number of these lineages, and it can be asserted that if any lineage whatever, detached from another tribe, asks to live in the midst of the Boni, it will be welcomed. From the first generation the children consider themselves as Boni.

In this regard one can cite the example of the Awara Bakka 3 lineage and that of the small lineage founded in Boniville by a Djuka woman, wife of Grand Man Ochi. All her descendants consider themselves Boni. /64/

But only the great lineages which constituted the tribe at its origin are social units recognized by the grand man, and only their heads are called to be members of the council.

We shall study first the interior functioning of the lineage, then the institutions going beyond the framework of the lineage.

/65 cont./

613 554 [183] It is enough to consult the genealogical tables, on each of which we have indicated the transmission of the office of captain, to be convinced that nothing of the kind is practiced: besides, it would be impossible in fact. The council chooses from among [643] /66/ the "brothers" and the "nephews" of the deceased. If the nomination is obtained, it is valid only if the grand man does not oppose his veto. He can require that the council be begun again.

613 554 643 The grand man observes the behavior of the new head for about a year, and if he is satisfied with him, he calls him to Boniville together with the members of the lineage. He turns over to him the bench and the baton of command (waka tiki) prepared by the doyen of the lineage. He takes him by the hand and has him sit down on the bench while proclaiming him head.

613 554 This appointment is made for life; once named, a captain cannot be dismissed.

The succession of the last three captains of the Dju lo is particularly interesting (see the genealogical table of this group).

In 1948, the first time we passed through, Diolè (El) had been captain for nearly 50 years, succeeding Doomé, whose position we have not been able to place exactly in the genealogical table.

Diolè died in 1951 at about 90 years of age. At the time of the mourning his yanka was questioned, and it designated (through the medium of the coffin bearers) as a desirable successor one of his nephews in the classificatory sense, named Loko (F39).

[643] [685] The council which met upon the close of the mourning for Diolè, in 1952, approved the designation of Loko; but the grand man opposed this appointment because Loko had been guilty of a serious crime (aggravated theft) and had incurred a sentence.

/66 cont./

613 554 The small, recently founded lineages attached to a lo each designate a head: for example, the Afi lineage has Awéni as head. But this head remains subject to the authority of the captain of the lo and his office has no official existence.

/67/ The appointment is made by a council - kuutu - of the lineage, but it is not valid until endorsed by the grand man. [717]

When the deceased captain did not, while living, designate any successor, his yɔrka is interrogated in order to know whom he prefers. That does not have the force of law but can influence the council.

The council meets several days after the end of mourning for the deceased captain. All the male members of the lineage, regardless of age, give their opinion. Strictly speaking, they do not vote: but the nomination is considered valid only if three-quarters of those present are in agreement. If not, they disband without having decided anything, and the lineage can remain without a head for years. On this topic can be cited the example of the Awara Bakka lo, which remained without a head from 1935 (?) to 1959, until the appointment of Kouduku. During this time the grand man had designated Captain Popo, head of the Lapé lineage, to secure the interim. As for the religious functions, they were taken care of by the joyen of the lineage. [643]

The captain has the following functions within the lineage:

1) He is priest of the ancestor worship and presides over the prayers and offerings made before the fraga tiki. In this duty he is replaced in case of absence by the oldest man of the lineage. [793] [769]

In case of the death of a member of the lineage from the effect of the kunu, the captain convokes all his people in order to proceed to collective prayers and offerings intended to appease the gods: [761] [762]

/70 cont./

159 52 613 [591] In March, 1957, Awéni, head of the Afi lineage, established in Asisi, was concerned about regrouping the members of his lineage and especially bringing back to Asisi Magdaléna (c20), a woman of about 45 years who had settled in Kormotibo near her husband L... (†1955), with her children and others whom she had raised. He went to Kormotibo and pointed out to her that since her husband was dead, she no longer had any reason to stay there and that she should come back to Asisi. Magdaléna insulted him in front of the inhabitants of the village, proclaimed that she had no orders to receive from anybody; then when he insisted, she armed herself with a stick and chased him across the village as far as the landing place. He had to re-embark precipitately to the laughter of the Kormotibo people.

Political and Legal Powers

• 613 613 [193] The grand man. The head of the Dikan lo fills the office of grand man of the Boni. The present grand man, Difu, was about 67 years old in 1958.

Oral tradition has kept the names of his seven predecessors:

Gongo (Dikan lo)	1810-1840	dates noted according to Coudreau
Labi (Adam?) (Dikan lo)	1840-1870	
Aryaba (Kotika lo)	1870-1876	
Anato (Kotika lo)	1876-1891	
Ochi (Dikan lo)	1891-1915	
Awenaay id.	1917-1936	
Difu id.	since 1937.	

[95] According to information collected by Coudreau in 1887, Gongo was the successor to Agosu, himself successor to Boni. Upon the death of Labi, there were only women and children in the Dikan lo. The office of grand man then passed to the Kotika lo with Aryaba and Anato. It then came back to the Dikan lo with Ochi.

/70 cont./

643 613 In 1957 the Dikan lineage was practically extinct. There remained only Grand Man Difu and his elder brother Samalobi, very old.

529 The present grand man does not know the genealogy of his lineage beyond his grandmother. /Fig. 14 appears here./ /71/

648 At the death of Awensay it was Samalobi, eldest of Awensay's classificatory nephews, who was to be named; but the French administration thought they had to oppose it, judging him too old; he yielded with good grace.

613 165 594 Samalobi, the ancestor, the patriarch of the Boni, died in May, 1957 at over 100 years old. Although very weakened by his infirmities and nearly blind, he kept great prestige and no important decision was made without his consent.

173 The son of Aputu, companion of Crevaux, he had retained an exact memory of the explorer whom he had accompanied during part of his trip in 1877. It is thanks to his memories that Crevaux's prestige has remained so great on the Maroni.

643 692 578 613 583 582 The grand man judges without appeal disputes between members of different lineages. Truly serious affairs are extremely rare, if one keeps in mind that:

--Disputes over the payment of dowry, paying it back in case of divorce, and the assignment of the children, which form the main part of the cases argued before ordinary African jurisdictions, do not exist among the Refugee Blacks;

643 613

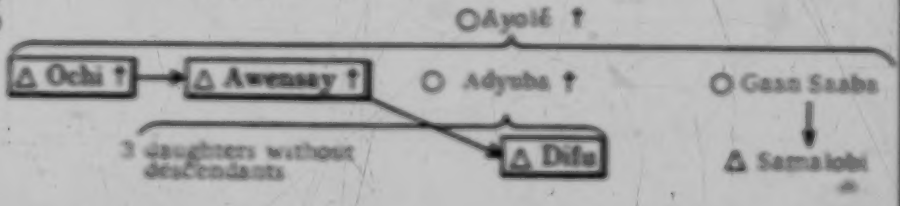

Fig. 14. Filiation of the last three grand men of the Boni.

643 /71 cont./
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--Disputes over the appropriation of lands are very rare in Boni country because of the sparseness of population.

We have never seen the grand man hold anything other than audiences of conciliation relative to people who had fought or threatened each other. [183] The custom of the Refugee Blacks would indeed be difficult to fit into a code. The state of persons and social duties derive so directly from beliefs that the intervention of a judge is not indispensable for the functioning of the society.

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The grand man is supposed to retain power over all the lands of Boni country which are not allocated to lineages; in particular, this is the case with the upper basin of the headstreams of the Lawa.

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It is above all by virtue of this that he is considered the suzerain of the Indians living in this territory. The same conception exists among the Djuka with respect to the headstreams of the Tapanahoni.

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The suzerainty of the grand man over the land and waters is marked, as in Africa, by special rights in the domain of hunting and fishing. He alone can authorize group fishing on the great river by the process of la nivrée. The same problem does not hold for hunting which is practiced in a strictly individual fashion. But it is taken for granted that if a tapir (1) is killed in Boni country,

1. The tapir is the largest animal of the bush.

the hunter must carry its head as well as a thigh to the grand man.

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A certain misunderstanding reigns between the Europeans and the Boni on the subject of the duties of the grand man. The Europeans tend to believe that he commands the tribe in the way in which a colonel commands a regiment, that he can designate a certain man for a certain job, fix the price of boats, etc. The grand man tries to give satisfaction to the administration /72/ to justify the pay he draws, but he succeeds very badly in it, for in reality he possesses almost no temporal power.

/12 cont./

643 691 641 The morality of the Refugee Blacks knows in effect only obligations of a social and religious order. As for everything concerning material life, each one has the absolute right, one could even say the duty, to act as he sees fit, insofar as he does not wrong anyone else.

643 691 641 [156] If the grand man gave an order obliging someone to act against his own interest, for example if he wished to lower arbitrarily the price of boats, this order would be lawfully void. If the grand man has very great personal influence, he can persuade the Boni that it is to their interest to obey such a prescription, but in no case can his command have the effect of imposing by force an arbitrary order foreign to the social and religious tradition; the present grand man is weak in character to boot, sensitive to the influence of the Creoles and very little given to exerting any authority.

643 791 In reality, the office of grand man is above all religious. The grand man centralizes, if one may say so, the struggle against evil forces and watches ceaselessly over the welfare of the collectivity.

643 764 When a man dies, his near relatives come to report on the questioning of the yɔ́ka. Burial cannot take place until the grand man has made sure that all the prescriptions have been filled. People come to report to him again after the burial so that he can be sure that no suprahuman danger remains.

643 795 [782] The grand man has special power over the yɔ́ka (spirits) of the dead, which the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks place on a level intermediate between the human and the divine. When one of these yɔ́ka exerts against a lineage a vengeance (kúnu) whose malignity goes beyond habitual bounds, the grand man beseeches it to stop; they allege that things go back to normal, at least for a time.

This power attributed to the grand man invests him, in the eyes of the Boni, with a suprahuman character. It is the very foundation of his political power.

/12 cont./

643 778 241 The grand man acts as land head for the whole of the tribe. It is he who has the care of the sanctuary of mama gɔ̃ and who prays each year in the presence of a large gathering of people for the fertility of the soil.

643 793 796 982 The grand man is the priest of Odun, divinity whom the Boni regard as avenger of offenses against moral and religious law; by virtue of this, he alone is qualified to administer the oath against wɔ̃i (sorcery) and to implore the mercy of Odun toward those who have gone against his laws by fighting with arms.

643 152 In his religious functions this usually weak and unobtrusive man acts with sovereign authority and assurance, and we have several times seen people tremble before him.

643 681 [823] If someone has seriously transgressed the customary laws, or if he has stolen, committed adultery, given blows, poured forth serious insults or curses, the grand man inflicts on him punishment proportional to the gravity of the offense, such as making planks, /13/ a boat, pounding rice (if it is a woman). The product of the punishment is acquired by the grand man, as are the fines in money which he imposes in less serious cases.

643 685 For example in October, 1952, two adolescents of Boniville, Awétipay and Adyuka, were surprised while they were trying to break into an inhabited house; the grand man sentenced them forthwith to three days of forced labor, in the course of which he made them clean the approaches to the village and collect for his benefit wood for heating.

643 689 462 He can also punish disobedient or disrespectful young men by making them do work reserved for women, such as weeding the approaches to the village and the removal of dog droppings.

643 681 The grand man can confine a man to Boni villages by forbidding him to go beyond l'Enfant Perdu to the north and Kormotibo to the south; that is called sitafu sama (sitafu = captive). The man concerned, deprived of means of earning his living, thus becomes dependent on his family until he makes honorable amends.

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643 689 That happened especially to people who, summoned to work in the grand man's clearings, carried out their task with ill will.

About 1950, M...., of Papaïchton village, had openly revolted against the grand man whom he had refused to conduct to Saint-Laurent. The grand man sentenced him to make a large stairway of planks, from the Boniville wharf to the entrance to the village, giving him an injunction to leave the country if he refused. M... ended by yielding and executed the large stairway which can now be seen at the Boniville wharf.

643 648 292 199 The grand man is constantly concerned about his prestige and dignity; he is almost always dressed in the European manner and in ceremonies wears an impeccable white uniform; the French administration gives him a relatively large salary and, when he comes to Cayenne, he is put up in the hospital in the apartments reserved for officers.

643 [597] [634] [357] [466] To greet the grand man one does not look directly at him but places himself in profile with respect to him.

The grand man has no servants (that would be contrary to the morality of the Refugee Blacks) and leads a very simple life. Still, he does not do any hard manual labor; each year he calls together a certain number of men from each lo to work in his clearings; he does not pay them, for this work is an obligation provided for by custom, but he feeds them heartily.

643 462 Likewise, for his traveling, he requisitions by turns as boatmen two or three of his subjects. Sometimes also he requisitions women to help his wife at harvest time.

On the other hand, for all other work he may need (such as the construction of a large boat) he has to pay like everyone else and he is not given any reduction.

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643 644 586 The present grand man, contrary to his predecessors, has only one wife. She is dressed like the other women and works at her clearing like everyone else. /74/ but her marriage to the grand man imposes special obligations on her: she can not divorce him; neither can he repudiate her.

643 829 The attitude of the Boni toward the grand man is a curious mixture of respect and disparagement. They regard him as the living symbol of their nation, and each one resents as if it were a personal insult an outsider having an incorrect attitude toward him. But their undisciplined spirit kicks up at the measures he is obliged to take to make them respect customary law, and even the authority of a poised and benevolent man like Grand Man Difu is not willingly accepted. As a matter of fact, the Boni stand for the authority of the grand man as they adhere to the worship of their gods, by the feeling of an absolute and inexorable necessity; in their minds the grand man is above all the priest of Odun; if the grand man were not there, they would be without defense against the wisiman, without recourse against the vengeance exercised by the yaka of the dead of other lineages.

[854] [895]

The political power of the grand man is entirely based on these beliefs, and if they were to collapse, he would disappear with them. Nobody would submit to any other law than that of the lineage, founded upon fear of the ancestors.

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692 693 The lloni kuutu. This is the assembly of the men, without distinction of age (1) or kinship; the council (lloni = law) constitutes

> 1. There is no precise rule for fixing the age from which an adolescent may sit in this council. It is apparently when he has reached full physical development and earns his living by his own efforts, about 18 to 20 years. He does not have to be married.

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the legal apparatus of the Boni.

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692 693 [641] An essential principle of the social life of the Refugee Blacks is that every citizen carries the law within himself. If several men are requested to arbitrate a private quarrel, it is said that they form a Hati kuutu. But they can hand down only a sentence of conciliation. Only the general assembly convoked by the grand man has the power to impose its decision.

692 995 The ordinary role of the Hati kuutu is to judge the dead, to make sure that they were not witimã (sorcerers), to proceed to their interrogation in order to give the force of law to the answers, especially in what concerns inheritance.

692 693 995 The Hati kuutu meets when a death is announced; the first to arrive go to the grand man who designates two of the captains to preside over the council this time (for all the members are equal). In fact, rare are the councils attended by all the men present in the villages. Most of the time the Hati kuutu groups only about 30 men, mostly old men.

692 The Hati kuutu meets very rarely to judge a living man. That has happened only three times between 1948 and 1957.

692 687 In 1948 the grand man convoked the Hati kuutu to judge a man who, duly called as boatman to take him to Saint-Laurent, had not come. He was sentenced to make a palisade around the grand man's habitation, which took more than a month of work. /15/

692 685 In 1953 the council met to judge Loko (Dyu), who had made himself guilty of aggravated theft (simulated shipwreck to the detriment of a Benzdorp trader and resale of the merchandise), for which he had been condemned by French justice to several months in prison. Loko had to make honorable amends in the presence of the assembled members of his lineage, then he was sentenced to make 50 planks for the benefit of the grand man.

[224] [643] In August, 1957, the council met to judge Pozoto (Asisi-Dyu), 23 years old, and Amunapé (Asisi-Aw.B.), 70 years old, who were guilty of a grave offense: misappropriation of a tapir (mãpouti) killed by a Djuka who, feeling gratitude toward the grand man, had made known his intention to offer him part of the meat.

/75 cont./

591 997 692 In fact, the society of the Refugee Blacks has not elaborated true political institutions; it is essentially a grouping for collective defense against supraburnan perils. The council, like the grand man, has power and authority only insofar as it remains closely bound to thisfunction.

511 [545] [554] Absence of subordination. Among the Refugee Blacks no privileged class exists. /76/ and they all face life on a footing of rigorous equality; all receive the same education, must cultivate the soil, build their boats and houses, and live by paid work. The differences in standard of living observed from one to another stem basically from intelligence and work; and that, in spite of the belief in the possibility of getting rich by sorcery, is clearly understood by all.

565 [465] 571 461 [359] [469] Although the Boni willingly engage in paid work for one another in transportation by boat, there exists no tendency toward the formation of a class of rich people and one of wage-earners. No servants exist among them, and one observes in their mutual relations no exploitation of the weak. Neither does one observe that a rich man tries to have done by another, for pay, the customary jobs he must carry out for the benefit of his wife (clearing, building of boats). This would be looked on with great disfavor. The grand [543] man himself, if his grandson is not there to help him, goes himself to draw water from the river and he does it ostensibly, even though he has a constant concern for his prestige.

829 The misfortunes undergone by their ancestors are certainly at the base of this conception; for they have inspired in the Refugee Blacks a particular sense of human dignity which is not found to the same degree in Africa.

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621 Case of the village of Boniville. This village constitutes an
613 especially interesting case, for it brings together small fractions of
[174] the various lineages permanently settled there. It helps one to understand what the territorial implantation of the Refugee Blacks may have been toward the end of the 18th century at the time when their institutions were developing.

621 The principle is that the Boniville lands belong to the grand
613 man, the last representative of the Dikan lineage; he granted
423 individually to the inhabitants of the village the right to farm his
• [643] lands. These inhabitants thus hold only a right of use, and there can be no competition among them for the possession of the real
[425] rights. But the principle of transmission of the right of use in the same lineage remains for each clearing taken separately. For example, Kiémenti (Dju, F7), who made a clearing out of primary forest, concedes that after him his land may be occupied by any member of the Dju lineage residing in Boniville, but not by Dju lineage members living in Asisi. /81/

423 Few in number on a relatively extensive territorial sector,
621 the inhabitants of Boniville have not felt the need to divide the sector granted by the grand man into precise territorial zones.
423 It is difficult to foresee what will happen after the death of Grand
425 Man Difu when the rights of use will be transformed into real rights.
613 It is probable that a territorial division among the fractions of the lineage established in Boniville will be imperceptibly created by the simple fact that competition will arise among them.

423 Fishing, hunting, gathering, and mineral exploitation rights. These rights are totally separate from the right to farm; in this respect the conceptions of the Refugee Blacks reveal the precariousness of the bonds between the individual and the soil, which results from ecological conditions.

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613 --The Dikan lo, lineage of the grand man, nearly extinct
--A fragment of the Kotika lo
--A fragment of the Dju lo
--A fragment of the Lapé lo
--A fragment of the Papaïston lo
--A fragment of the Dipélu 1 lo

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241 The Dikan lineage holds the real rights over the whole of the lands situated on the eastern bank of the Lawa, from Puu Mofu Creek to the south up to the edge of L'Enfant Perdu village to the north.

The fragment of the Papaïston lo established in Boniville is in a special situation; it has for a long time possessed the lands situated to the south of Puu Mofu Creek up to the edge of Loka village (Lapé lo). This group has remained strongly organized and its members do not make clearings outside their zone, in which they have all the space desirable anyway.

[643] The members of the other groups make their clearings on all the surface formerly occupied by the Dikan lo. The grand man has reserved for his personal use the lands situated near Likanaon Creek, where he has built a farming habitation. The inhabitants of Boniville make their clearings on all the rest and without any definite territorial grouping.

[701] This finage (1), like the others studied in the present chapter, was

1. Finage: zone cultivated by the members of a collectivity.

visited in January, 1957, in other words shortly after the end of the land-clearing and at the beginning of the planting.

Study of some clearings of the Agodé bakka locality "behind Boniville":

abbreviations: (K) Kotika (D) Dikan (Dip) Dipélu
(Dju) Dju (P) Papaïston (L) Lapé

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764 692 This tribunal is charged with establishing the causes of death and rendering a decision on this subject which has the force of law. But it is above all charged with judging the dead person, with determining whether he has lived worthily, whether he has the right to be buried according to the rites and to be invoked as an ancestor, or whether on the contrary he was a wisimɛ.

[613] [645] The grand man designates one or two lineage heads to preside over the council and "command" the dead person until the burial.

The grand man designates who will lead the assemblage and will "command" the dead person until the burial.

764 692 613 This cannot be the head of the dead person's lineage, for no one can at the same time be judge and judged.

Ex.: for Béniti (Dju) this was Popo — head of the Lapé lo

for Atikati (Dju) it was Konuoku — head of the Awara Bakia lo

for Kotoïda (Aw.B.) it was Tafanié — head of the Papaïston lo

for Way (Dip. II) it was Tafanié — /162/

764 787 The 2nd and 3rd days after the death are given over to the interrogation of the dead person, which on the evening of the first day had scarcely begun.

[184] The rites of this interrogation vary from one village to another; in certain villages they begin to carry the dead man even before the construction of the coffin; the questions are not asked everywhere in the same fashion.

[171] The dead person is interrogated by methods widespread in West Africa and which are related to spiritualism: the coffin is carried on the heads of two men, feet forward. The dead man is supposed to push the bearers forward to say yes, and to make them now their heads from left to right to say no.

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The rites of the worship of Odun are known only by the grand man and by an old man who replaces him when he travels. They are practiced only on the occasion of the collective oath against witi, renewed every two or three years, and when it is necessary to implore Odun's mercy toward an offender. The officiant bathes the latter's body with a maceration of leaves that he alone knows.

To question Odun and know whether he pardons, they make use of a sacred object named afalaku, placed on a board put on the heads of two men. The answers yes and no are deduced by interpretation of the movements of the bearers, as in the interrogation of the dead.

The oath before Odun is also practiced as a legal test, permitting a man unjustly accused of theft or any misdeed whatever to justify himself.

Thus, in November, 1959, B... of Asisi, accused by two Djuka of being responsible for the burning of a large cabin /carbet/ in which objects of value were stored, asked to justify himself before Odun.

Odun's laws, which have the effect of forbidding violence, vengeance, and every form of oppression, give to the society of the Refugee Blacks a unique atmosphere of dignity and serenity which is not found to the same degree in animistic African societies. Most African societies censure sorcery and murder, but they accept vengeance and various forms of oppression. It is probable that the men who, two or three centuries ago, deep in the forests of Surinam, developed these laws, were inspired more or less consciously by Christian ideas; but they introduced them into an African system of thought, associating them with the idea of material sanctions in the present life, without which they would have been powerless.

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695 Fist-fighting is practiced also between individuals as a test for justification. If someone is unjustly accused of theft, this is the first idea which occurs to him, even before the oath before Odun. On this subject the Refugee Blacks have a conception analogous to that of the ancient Europeans, according to which God will come to the aid of the innocent person, giving him the strength of ten. This fighting, too, is subject to precise rules; it can be indulged in only publicly, in a village, never in the bush or on the river.

In spite of the importance attached to the oath before Odun, Boni custom does not make provision for any test for justification having a recognized legal value. This is what makes 628 613 the symbolic battle indispensable. Intervention is then asked of the head of a neutral lineage in order to restore peace. If no death or calamity takes place allowing /235/ belief in the unappeased vengeance of a dead person, the affair is very quickly forgotten. For example, in examining the table of marriages among the various lineages, one ascertains that there are a number of normal unions between the Dipélu and the Awara Bakka.

• 643 692 In these kinds of affairs the grand man has two very exact functions:

--To reveal pretense;

--To intervene as supreme arbiter in case of necessity.

[789] [795] Each time that someone is attacked by a fit of possession and claims to speak in the name of a yɔrka coming to exercise a kunu, the lineage head conducts him to the grand man who makes sure that there is no question of pretense.

643 795 787 695 The grand man, in the thought of the Boni, has the power to compel any yɔrka to manifest itself.

He conducts the person concerned to the fraga tiki and invokes the yɔrka. If pretense is involved, the individual will not be able to articulate a syllable. If it is true possession, the yɔrka will speak through his mouth.

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775 A few years ago a Kormotibo woman was thus confounded.
787 She had wanted to pretend possession by a yɔ́nka in order to
695 blackmail another family.

Grand Man Difu recently forbade the bequeathing of gods
784 and yɔ́nka exercising the kunu (1). People will wait for them
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[787] to manifest themselves of their own accord. That will reduce the risks of pretense.

1. Let us recall that the dead are questioned on this subject as for the apportionment of the rest of their heritage.

643 The grand man's lineage does not exercise any kunu upon
613 another lineage, and no kunu is exercised upon it. For the Boni
775 this is a fundamental idea, because the grand man is precisely
784 the supreme recourse in case of persistent calamities attributed to the yɔ́nka of a dead person. The grand man has the power to exorcise all the dead Boni. If his lineage exercised a kunu or were victim of one, he would be judge and litigant at the same time.

When, with the death of Grand Man Difu, the Dikan lineage is extinct, and when the function passes to another lineage, consideration of the kunu exercised by the lineages upon one another will be determinative in the choice of his successor.

Divination; Premonition; Dreams

787 Divination. It plays an essential role among the Refugee Blacks
626 as in all animistic societies. Individuals have recourse to it
182 to inspire all important discussions; in large measure one can say that for them it takes the place of will and conscience.

/259 cont./

771 [782] to the god, and their words of thanks lasted scarcely half a minute (1). At the time of our first trip on the Maroni, in

1. Yet custom expressly provides for this rite of thanking.

1948, the same scenes had unfolded, going as well as coming back.

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Rites Relative to Agriculture

These rites occupy a relatively minor place in the religious life of the Refugee Blacks, which may be attributed to the great regularity of the climate and the absence of calamities affecting the yield of crops.

[813] It does not seem, at least among the Boni, that a religious bond is assumed between the lineage and the land, and rites intended to insure the fertility of the soil are carried out by each one for himself in the neighborhood of his own field; the lineage head does not appear to play any particular role in this regard. In the thought of the Boni, the fertility of the soil depends upon a local divinity, to which is offered de facto worship; the temporary or permanent users of the lands situated in the domain of this god perform on their own behalf the rites of this worship without any distinction of origin, whether they are Boni, Djuka, or Saramaka.

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[796] [793] [643] The only collective worship existing in Boni country is the worship of mama gaan, of which the grand man is priest. Its rites are limited to a short annual prayer.

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Cult of Mama go5. Mama go5, mother of the earth, is represented by a crude statue of white clay provided with enormous breasts, symbol of fecundity, which can be seen in a little hut situated on the open place of Boniville village. Each year, when the time for cutting the clearings approaches, the grand man, surrounded by many other people, prays to the god to grant fertility to the plantings. If rain does not fall, an offering of water and tafia is made and the statue is sprinkled.

811 The Boni do not appear to associate the idea of women's fecundity with that of the fertility of the soil, and we have not heard anyone say that the grand man prays on this subject.

241 Neither do they appear to have a very clear idea about
776 the relationships of this worship with that of the go5 gadu, local gods of the soil.

796 Every three years a great possession dance takes place
535 in Boniville on January 1. /260/ in which the Papa gadu gods
789 dance in front of the sanctuary of Mama go5. We have not been able to obtain specific information on the meaning of this rite.

241 Cult of the go5 gadu. It is assumed that every portion of land
77 is under the sway of a local god, go5 gadu. Its power is
784 limited only by the fertility of the soil, and he who neglects its worship cannot be attacked in his person or in his goods, but only punished by a poor harvest.

What is the nature of these gods, what is their place in the cosmogony? These are questions which not one of our informants had ever asked himself. In their minds, go5 gadu has a de facto existence, and is rendered de facto worship. This worship consists essentially of:

782 --Offerings made at the moment of planting;
529 --The observance of a local day of rest, kina de, corresponding to the god's day of rest.

Schmaus--464 K-5 (1948-1956) 1961 SRS Bush Negroes SRS
Boni

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Relations with the Other Populations

The tribes of Refugee Blacks do not constitute a closed world. They have lived since their formation in close symbiosis with the neighboring populations: autochthonous Indians, Europeans, and Creoles. Their traditions and their conception of life have been strongly influenced by these, not because they have lost anything of their interior unity, but because they have accepted, at least collectively, the idea that they have bonds and duties toward other men.

Just as their economy on the material plane is based on exchange, so they consider the symbiosis of their group with the neighboring groups as the normal order of the universe. The misfortunes undergone by their ancestors have given them an extreme horror of violence; they consider peace a precious blessing common to all nations, and their moral principles which forbid harming anyone extend to all men. It is clear that these notions are less clearly understood on the individual level and that there are, as elsewhere, some thefts and abuses of trust. But, on /293/ the collective level, the relations between the Refugee Blacks and their neighbors are established on a base of trust, loyalty, and honesty not found to the same degree in Africa.

Relations with the other tribes. The Boni do not have any well-defined political ties with the other tribes of Refugee Blacks, but the grand men have semiofficial relations through the medium of messengers, and consult one another rather frequently.

The Boni have harbored a tenacious resentment against the Djuka for having in former times allied themselves with the Dutch against them, but this resentment, chiefly collective in nature, has died down with time; it does not prevent individual relations from being cordial.

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175 648 727 with their allies. The sites of their villages, marked on Coudreau's map (1889) are in immediate proximity to those of former Oayana villages.

175 648 [643] relations must have been created rapidly and in a very natural fashion. The grand man of the Boni is in a way the successor of the Indian chiefs; this situation was not imposed by force; it results from the privileged situation of the Boni on the river, which until recent times obliged the Indians to deal through them in order to trade with the outside world.

Although the Boni took advantage of this situation in days gone by to impose arbitrary rates of exchange upon the Indians, this relation must not be imagined as the exploitation of conquered by conqueror. It is based on the absolute respect of each 648 829 group for the beliefs and social structure of the other, and an activity for each befitting its inclination. The proverb says: [434] "To the Boni the river, to the Indians the forest." Thus it is that the Boni traditionally buy arrows from the Indians, while the latter buy paddles from them; the meaning of this symbol is perfectly understood by both.

648 582 Marriages between the two groups, without being forbidden, are regarded as contrary to custom (2).

159 156 643 648 582 2. The marriage of Grand Man Awemay to an Indian woman about 1815 was inspired by complex motives. Toward the end of his life, Awemay could no longer stand the Boni, his imperious personality putting up badly with their individualism and their taste for discussion. He had established the Indian country a farming habitation in which he lived nearly all

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year; by taking an Indian woman as his wife he apparently sought to humiliate his subjects.

Awemay's children and grandchildren were all dead in 1957 except for two women, both sterile. There has been no other case of marriage between Boni and Indians.

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439 /294/ In practice, the basis for commercial exchanges is the following: the Indians furnish hammocks, and above all dogs trained for hunting, to which great value is attached. The Boni furnish boats. In days gone by they also brought imported objects, machetes, axes, and beads, but this form of trade has disappeared since the Indians have had the possibility of getting supplies from the Europeans.

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648 Several observers, coming after Coudreau (1890) and Gé..rt (1937) in particular, have expressed the opinion that these relations were founded on fear and that the Boni, utilizing mysterious means of pressure, used to oppress the Indians.

After seven missions spent in contact with both, we affirm that these assertions are without foundation. On the contrary, one can only admire the way in which these primitive groups have been able to create loyal and trusting relations with one another. The Indians and Boni who have worked with us have always shown themselves happy to be together. To realize this, it was sufficient to hear the animated conversations they used to have in the evening around the campfires about their respective families, the events which took place in their villages, fishing, or hunting.

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648 A picturesque incident once more showed us this attitude in the course /295/ of a circuit on the Litani in 1952. When [868] we passed through AluTeé village, our four Boni boatmen, who had killed some couanans, had prepared a very appetizing dish for themselves; they had scarcely begun to eat when several Indians arrived unexpectedly who joined in the conversation, sat down beside them, then began to dip their spoons into the pot. Other Indians came and, continuing to talk things over deliberately and without hurrying, came and took their share of the feast. The Boni were progressively pushed back to the [152] second row and finally gave up. Those of them laughed about [329] this incident which was familiar to them; the fourth was furious but he did not dare say anything, for, said he to us, if he struck the Indians as he wanted to, he risked being bewitched.

648 In truth, what is the nature of the authority that the grand • 643 man of the Boni is supposed to exercise over the Indians? Does it involve precise obligations, a tribute, vexatious measures? Not in the least: it is reduced nowadays to two things:

--The principle of the obedience of the Indian village heads to the person of the grand man;

--The consideration of transport by boat in the Boni fashion.

One can only approve of this interdiction which protects the Indians more than it harms them. As for the personal influence of Grand Man Difu, it is extremely favorable; he has a profound knowledge of the language and customs of the Indians, toward whom he has always exhibited an interest and sympathy which are certainly sincere. When, during the ceremonies at the fraga tiki, he appeals to the ancestors to ask them to watch over the Boni, he does not fail to add: gaã yyaka, de mu luku de Bigi: Ancestors, watch over the Indians.

648 It is also said of the Boni that they are interested in the Indians only in order to traffic with them. Even if that were true -- we have shown how inexact this assertion was -- we should hold all the same that it is much less dangerous for the